Job mobility rises over the second year of the pandemic

Media Release

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Source: Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia, February 2022

Job mobility rose to the highest level in a decade according to annual statistics released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Job mobility at its highest rate since 2012

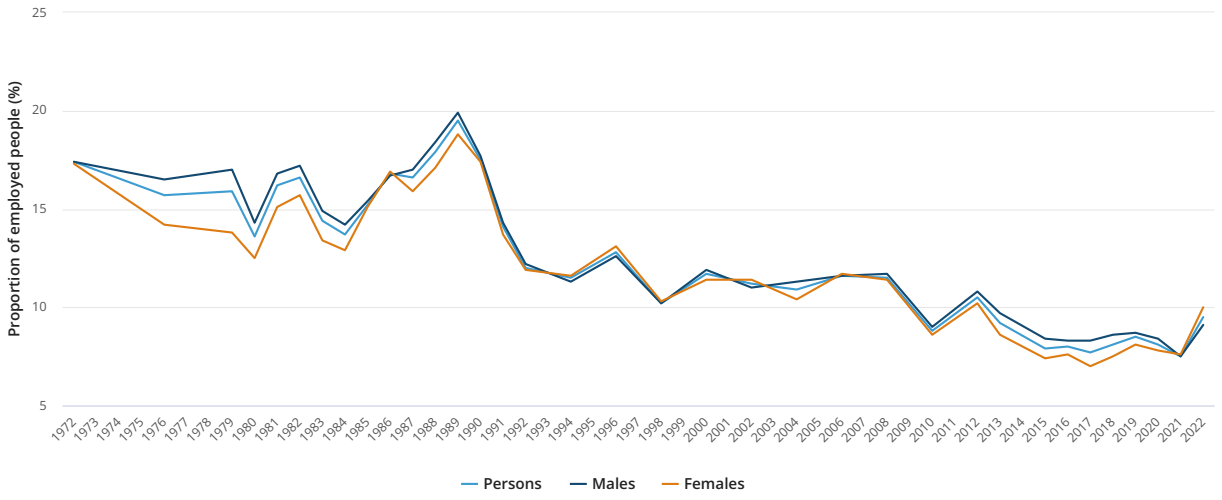
Bjorn Jarvis, head of Labour Statistics at the ABS, said: “In the 12 months to February 2022, 9.5 per cent of employed people changed their employer or business. This was the highest job mobility rate in a decade (since the year ending February 2012).

“Job mobility in Australia had generally been trending down for decades and reached a record low of 7.5 per cent during the first year of the pandemic.

"As the labour market has progressively recovered, we have seen an increase in job mobility, with 1.3 million people changing jobs during the second year of the pandemic. This was around 300,000 more people than the year before (970,000 in the year ending February 2021), and around 220,000 more than the year before the pandemic (1.1 million in the year ending February 2020).

"Some of the increase over the second year of the pandemic will be delayed or deferred job mobility from the first year."

Job mobility: Employed people who changed jobs during the year



Note: 2015 to 2022 data are available from Table 01 in the data downloads section of Job mobility (/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/feb-2022) . Pre-2015 historical data can be found in the 2018 release of Participation, Job Search and Mobility (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6226.0Main+Features1February%202018?OpenDocument) publication.

The recent rise in job mobility was more pronounced for women (rising from 7.6 per cent to 10.0 per cent), than men (7.5 per cent to 9.1 per cent).

Job mobility rose in all occupation groups. The largest rises were for Clerical and administrative workers (7.0 per cent to 10.3 per cent) and Machinery operators and drivers (7.9 per cent to 10.6 per cent).

Almost all industries saw a rise in job mobility in the second year of the pandemic, with the largest increases seen in Professional, scientific and technical services (7.4 per cent to 11.7 per cent) and Wholesale trade (5.9 per cent to 10.0 per cent). The only industry to show a decline in mobility was Mining (a slight fall from 11.8 per cent to 11.3 per cent).

“In changing jobs during the year ending February 2022, people were more likely to change

their industry (57 per cent) than their occupation (45 per cent). They were also more likely to change to a job with more hours (36 per cent) than to a job with the same hours (33 per cent) or less hours (31 per cent)," Mr Jarvis said.

Potential workers: unemployed and those not in the labour force

In addition to job mobility, today's release also includes annual information on people who were unemployed and not in the labour force. This provides insights into participation and potential barriers in the labour market.

In February 2022, there were 1.8 million people who were not working but wanted to work, down from 2.2 million people in February 2021. This included 560,000 unemployed people and 1.2 million people not in the labour force (who were either not actively looking for work and/or not available to work in the survey reference week).

Not everyone who wanted to work was available to work. Of the 1.8 million people in February 2022 who wanted to work, 1.0 million were available to start work straight away and an additional 468,000 were available to start within four weeks (but not immediately).

There were 745,000 people in February 2022 who wanted to work, were available to start within four weeks, but did not actively look for work. The main reasons they did not look for work were because they were attending an educational institution (147,000 people), childcare factors (114,000 people) and factors indicating that they were a 'discouraged job seeker' (88,000 people, down from 113,000 in February 2021).

Further details can be found in Participation, Job Search and Mobility (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia/feb-2022) on www.abs.gov.au (https://www.abs.gov.au/) .

Media notes

- Job mobility (or job churn) refers to employed people changing their employer or business. The period in focus for this survey is the previous 12 months.
- Potential workers refers to a broad group of people in the usually resident civilian population aged 15 years and over who want to work and may be active and/or available within the labour market in the short to medium term. It includes unemployed people (who are active and available labour supply in the survey reference week) and other groups who are not in the labour force but who want to work (people who aren't immediately available and/or people who aren't actively looking for work).

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